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Place ahead

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The Place Ahead

SOME men have the idea that opals are unlucky. When such men fail to get ahead they blame the opals. Others attribute progress entirely to influence, and when they fail to gain promotion, consider lack of that possession as the cause.

The truth is the man who fails to move forward is lacking in vision. Opals have nothing to do with the matter. There never was a time when influence generally played so unimportant a part in business. There has never been a time when downright ability counted for so much.

Ability is a word which means a great deal. It does not restrict to the performance of routine and isolated operations. It is far more inclusive.

The individual with ability performs his specific task as well as he can. He regards his relations to other individuals and to the organization as a whole. He considers his position as a representative of such organization. He fits himself for the duties of the position above him.

The assistant financial head of a large institution had gone comfortably along for several years content to do well the work assigned to him. He appeared to give no thought to the place ahead. Suddenly his chief resigned. He seemed to be the logical man for the position, yet for some time he was not appointed. He wondered at

it and worried over it. Still it did not occur to him that his neglect to fit himself to take up the work of a higher order was a factor bearing on the indecision.

In the accounting department of a certain railroad company it was made obligatory that every man should fit himself for the place ahead. The order was not taken seriously until one or two men were discharged for failure to comply. The others developed into the liveliest corps imaginable. The results were most satisfactory.

Fitting one's self may mean a number of things. It may be learning to do certain specific work. It may be acquiring tact or the art of supervision. Some persons have to improve their appearance or suppress some disagreeable aspect of their personality. Others have to cultivate some trait which is lacking. It consists, first, in analyzing the job and determining its requirements; second, analyzing one's self; third, setting about to bring the individual qualities into line with the requirements of the job.

Vision of the sort just mentioned is likely to account for many of the promotions today. It is safer than depending upon luck. It is more likely to bring success than trusting in a talisman. But vision must be accompanied by thorough, intelligent, effective work in the present place. Thus may one fit himself for the place ahead.